

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

**HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL**

**SUBMISSION FROM GREGOR FORBES**

To whom it may concern,

I am a Scottish citizen writing in opposition to the proposed Hate Crime and Order Bill, and I would like to outline my reasons for opposition.

I'm not going to tell you that I'm a free speech absolutist and that this law has no place, because this is untrue. I believe there is a line which when crossed causes a great deal of harm to individuals either emotionally or through an incitement to violence. However, I would like to say having read the bill that it seems to me to be severely misaligned with its intended goal of protecting Scottish individuals.

The bill from my understanding fails to acknowledge any sort of context to things being said, and seems to be open to abuse, should a member of one of the protected categories decide they wish to cause harm to an individual they have bad blood with, and may be at risk of hurting the lives of many to protect a few.

I strongly believe that all individuals should be treated equally under the eyes of the law. To see a distinction made for punishing misogyny but not misandry is genuinely an abhorrent and one sided mistake, which acts as though Women can not be abusive and hateful to men.

Context matters. There's a difference between bantering with mates or making jokes, and hurling abuse at an individual with malice intent. I believe that this bill as implemented would do untold damage to the lives of many individuals who should really stand to be innocent under the eyes of the law.

I strongly urge you to reconsider implementing this bill, and wait until it can be sensibly amended. As it stands it's a chilling read and I don't know if I really want to live in a Scotland where this bill is put into law.

I thank you for your time and consideration, and God Willing you'll do the right thing.

Yours sincerely  
Gregor Scott Forbes  
20 July 2020